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3 a user interface for displaying the plurality of selectable components and a  
4 plurality of slots into which the plurality of selectable components can be  
5 placed; and  
6 a user intelligence communicatively coupled to the user interface, for receiving a  
7 set of constraints from a remote inference engine and implementing the set  
8 of constraints.

1        10.     The system of claim 9, wherein the visual user interface comprises:  
2        donors depicting the plurality of selectable components;  
3        receptors depicting the plurality of slots into which the donors can be placed;  
4        a graphical manipulation enabler for implementing drag and drop behavior of the  
5                donors into the receptors; and  
6        a configuration conflicts displayer, for updating a visual display responsive to at  
7                least one of the plurality of donors being put into at least one of the  
8                plurality of slots such that at least one constraint stored on the user  
9                intelligence is violated.

1            11.        The system of claim 9, wherein the user intelligence comprises:  
2            an interpreter for receiving a set of constraints from an inference engine;  
3            a storage for storing the set of constraints;  
4            an implementor for implementing the forward-looking rules stored in the table;  
5            and  
6            an encoder for encoding and sending data regarding a user's current selection

from the plurality of donors and the plurality of receptors to the inference engine.

12. A system for visually configuring a product from a plurality of selectable components, comprising:

on a client device:

a visual user interface for displaying the plurality of selectable components and a plurality of slots into which the plurality of selectable components can be placed;

a user intelligence communicatively coupled to the visual user interface for determining, by using a forward-looking rules table, the validity of placement of one of the plurality of selectable components into one of the plurality of slots; and

on a remote host device:

an inference engine communicatively coupled to the user intelligence, for storing rules and constraints governing placement of the plurality of selectable components, and for generating the forward-looking rules table.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the client device further comprises a web browser which is communicatively coupled to the remote host device via a network service.

14. A computer program embodied in a tangible medium and capable of being executed by a computer for performing a method for visually configuring a product by placing a plurality of selectable components into a plurality of slots, comprising:

- (a) initializing a configuration layout with proper state;
- (b) receiving a selection of one of the plurality of selectable objects, and of one of the plurality of slots in which the selected object may be placed;
- (c) providing visual feedback indicating a validity of the selections;
- (d) receiving a placement of the selected object;
- (e) receiving input regarding the placement from a remote inference engine;
- (f) updating the visual feedback as needed based on the received input; and
- (g) repeating steps (b) through (f) until no more selections are received.

15. A computer program embodied in a tangible medium and capable of being executed by a computer for performing a method for visually configuring a product by placing a plurality of selectable components into a plurality of slots, comprising:

- (a) initializing a configuration layout with proper state;
- (b) receiving a selection of one of the plurality of selectable objects, and of one of the plurality of slots in which the selected object may be placed;
- (c) looking up a set of constraints on the placement of the selected object;
- (d) receiving a placement of the selected object;
- (e) receiving input regarding the placement from a remote inference engine;
- (f) implementing the received input;

